

REMARKS

The Examiner objected to claims 5, 6, 10-19 as dependent upon a rejected base claim, but stated that these claims would be allowable if they were rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicant has amended claims 5 and 10 by rewriting the claims in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. The Applicant respectfully requests allowance of claims 5, 6 and 10-19.

The Examiner rejected claims 1-4 and 7-9 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Wolever (USP 943,329). In response, Applicant has amended claim 1 to include a limitation of allowable claim 5, namely the inclusion of a first power unit having a vacuum source and a braking tube; the braking tube being in fluid communication with the first duct system and the vacuum source applying a reduced fluid pressure to the braking tube. This limitation is neither disclosed nor claimed by Wolever. Applicant therefore submits that amended claim 1 is not anticipated by Wolever. Inasmuch as claims 2-4 and 7-9 depend either directly or indirectly from amended claim 1, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 1-4 and 7-9, under 35 USC 102(b) be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected claims 22 and 23 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Wolever (USP 943,329). In response, Applicant has amended claim 22 to include the step of reducing the velocity of the carrier by passing it through a braking tube disposed in the duct system. (Claim 23 is dependent on amended claim 22.) Applicant respectfully suggests that the method of transferring a carrier to a terminal

location as claimed by the Applicant in amended Claims 22 and 23 is not anticipated by Wolever. This reference neither discloses nor claims a method for pneumatically transferring a carrier that includes the step of reducing the velocity of the carrier by passing it through a braking tube. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 22 and 23 under 35 USC 102(b) be withdrawn.

The Examiner also rejected claims 20 and 21 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wolever. The Examiner stated that while Wolever discloses a plurality of first sending units, a first duct system, and a first power unit, he/she does not disclose a plurality of second sending units, a second duct system and a second power unit. The Examiner further stated that it would be obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to have provided a plurality of second sending units, a second duct system and a second power unit, since it has been held that mere duplication of the essential working parts of a device only involves routine skill in the art. *St. Regis Paper Co. v. Bemis Co.*, 193 USPQ 8. In response, Applicant wishes to indicate that rejected claims 20 and 21 depend either directly or indirectly from amended claim 1. Inasmuch as Wolever does not disclose, claim or suggest the use of a braking tube disposed in the duct system (as is claimed in amended claim 1), Applicant submits that amended claim 1, and consequently claims 22 and 23 are not obvious in view of Wolever. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the rejection of Claims 22 and 23 under 35 USC 103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicant requests reconsideration of amended claims 1, 5, 10 and 22 and requests allowance of claims 1-23.

Applicant has added new claims 26-35. These claims depend from amended claim 1 and include the limitations shown in original claims 10-19, which claims were indicated as being allowable. Additionally, new claims 24, 25 and 36 have been added in which the carrier has been more specifically defined as a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

Applicant respectfully requests consideration of new claims 24-36.

If the Examiner believes that a telephone interview would be beneficial to advance prosecution of the instant application to early issue, he is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted at Canton, Ohio, this 26th day of Sept, 2002.

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on this 26th day of September, 2002.



Fiona Ferguson



AMENDED CLAIMS

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Once amended) A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location; and

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit; and

a first power unit having a vacuum source and a braking tube; said braking tube being in fluid communication with the first duct system and the vacuum source applying a reduced fluid pressure to the braking tube.

5. (Once amended) [The system of Claim 1, further comprising] A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location;

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit; and

a first power unit having a vacuum source and a braking tube;

the braking tube being formed with an elongated braking channel, an upper pillow opening, and a lower pillow opening;

the braking channel being in fluid communication with the first duct system;

the upper and lower pillow openings being in fluid communication with the braking channel;

the upper and lower pillow openings being longitudinally spaced apart a first distance from one another along the braking channel;

the first distance adapted to be at least as long as the length of the carrier;

the vacuum source being in fluid communication with the braking channel through the upper and lower pillow openings;

the vacuum source applying a reduced fluid pressure to the braking channel through the upper and lower pillow openings.

10. (Once Amended) [The system of Claim 9,] A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location;

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit, wherein each of the first sending units defines an insertion opening in fluid communication with the first duct system; each of the first sending units further including:

an insertion door movable between a sealed position and a delivery position; the insertion door substantially preventing the flow of fluid through the insertion opening into the first duct system when in the sealed position;

wherein each first sending unit further includes:

a sending locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position and an energized position;

the insertion door being movable between the sealed and delivery positions when the sending locking mechanism is in the de-energized position; and

the energized position of the sending locking mechanism adapted to hold the insertion door in the sealed position.

22. (Once Amended) A method for pneumatically transferring a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a terminal location, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the carrier into one of a plurality of sending units, the sending units each selectively allowing fluid communication between the exterior of the sending unit and a duct system, the duct system allowing one-way fluid communication from each sending unit to a single receiving unit;

transferring the carrier through the duct system;

reducing the velocity of the carrier by passing the carrier through a braking tube disposed in the duct system; and

receiving the carrier at the receiving unit.

24. The system of Claim 1, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

25. The system of Claim 5, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

26. The system of Claim 9, wherein each first sending unit further includes:
a sending locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position

and an energized position;

the insertion door movable between the sealed and delivery positions when the sending locking mechanism is in the de-energized position; and

the energized position of the sending locking mechanism adapted to hold the insertion door in the sealed position.

27. The system of Claim 26, wherein each sending locking mechanism includes a solenoid configured to move the locking mechanism between the de-energized and energized positions;

28. The system of Claim 27, wherein each sending locking mechanism further includes a locking cam, the locking cam being pivotally mounted on the first sending unit, the locking cam being pivoted by the solenoid.

29. The system of Claim 26, wherein the sending locking mechanism of one of the first sending units is in communication with at least one other sending locking mechanism.

30. The system of Claim 26, wherein each first sending unit further includes: a sending switch having open and closed positions; and the sending switch being in communication with the sending locking mechanism of at least one other first sending unit.

31. The system of Claim 26, wherein the first power unit is in fluid communication with the first duct system; the first power unit selectively applying a reduced fluid pressure to the first duct system;

the reduced fluid pressure being adapted to transfer the carrier from the one of the initial locations to the terminal location;

the first power unit being switchable between an on position and an off position;

the on position of the first power unit corresponding with application of the reduced fluid pressure; and

the on position of the first power unit corresponding with at least one of the sending switches being in the closed position.

32. The system of Claim 26, wherein the receiving unit is formed with a first reception cavity and a removal opening, the first reception cavity adapted to receive the carrier from the first duct system, the removal opening adapted to provide communication between the first reception cavity and the exterior of the receiving unit.

33. The system of Claim 32, wherein the first duct system is in fluid communication with the first reception cavity and further comprising an access door movable between an open position and a closed position, the access door adapted to permit access to the first reception cavity from the exterior of the receiving unit when in the open position, the access door adapted to prevent fluid communication between the exterior of the receiving unit and the first reception cavity when in the closed position.

34. The system of Claim 33, wherein the receiving unit further includes a receiving switch movable between an open position and a closed position;
the open position of the receiving switch corresponding with the open position of the access door;
the closed position of the receiving switch corresponding with the closed position

of the access door;

all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units being in the energized position when the receiving switch is in the open position; and

all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units being in the de-energized position when the receiving switch is in the closed position.

35. The system of Claim 34, wherein each first sending unit further includes a sending switch and wherein the receiving unit includes a receiving locking mechanism;

the receiving locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position and an energized position;

the receiving locking mechanism in the de-energized position permitting the access door to move between the open and closed positions;

the receiving locking mechanism in the energized position preventing the access door in the closed position from moving away from the closed position;

each sending switch being operable between an open position and a closed position;

the de-energized position of the receiving locking mechanism and all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units corresponding with all of the sending switches being in the open position and the receiving switch being in the closed position;

the closed position of the sending switch of any one of the first sending units corresponding with the receiving locking mechanism and the sending locking mechanisms of at least the other of the first sending units being in the energized position; and

the open position of the receiving switch corresponding with all of the sending locking mechanisms being in the energized position.

36. The system of Claim 10, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

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CLEAN VERSION OF AMENDED CLAIMS

1. (Once amended) A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location; and

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit; and

a first power unit having a vacuum source and a braking tube; said braking tube being in fluid communication with the first duct system and the vacuum source applying a reduced fluid pressure to the braking tube.

5. (Once amended) A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location; and

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit;

a first power unit having a vacuum source and a braking tube;

the braking tube being formed with an elongated braking channel, an upper pillow opening, and a lower pillow opening;

the braking channel being in fluid communication with the first duct system;

the upper and lower pillow openings being in fluid communication with the braking channel;

the upper and lower pillow openings being longitudinally spaced apart a first distance from one another along the braking channel;

the first distance adapted to be at least as long as the length of the carrier;

the vacuum source being in fluid communication with the braking channel through the upper and lower pillow openings;

the vacuum source applying a reduced fluid pressure to the braking channel through the upper and lower pillow openings.

10. (Once Amended) A system adapted to move a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a common terminal location; the carrier having a length; the system comprising:

a plurality of first sending units, each first sending unit defining one of the initial locations;

a receiving unit disposed at the common terminal location;

a first duct system extending from each of the first sending units to the first receiving unit; the first duct system adapted to allow a carrier to be moved from any one of the first sending units to the receiving unit, wherein each of the first sending units defines an insertion opening in fluid communication with the first duct system; each of the first sending units further including:

an insertion door movable between a sealed position and a delivery position; the insertion door substantially preventing the flow of fluid through the insertion opening into the first duct system when in the sealed position;

wherein each first sending unit further includes:

a sending locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position and an energized position;

the insertion door being movable between the sealed and delivery positions when the sending locking mechanism is in the de-energized position; and

the energized position of the sending locking mechanism adapted to hold the insertion door in the sealed position.

22. (Once Amended) A method for pneumatically transferring a carrier from one of a plurality of initial locations to a terminal location, the method comprising the steps of:

inserting the carrier into one of a plurality of sending units, the sending units each selectively allowing fluid communication between the exterior of the sending unit and a duct system, the duct system allowing one-way fluid communication from each sending unit to a single receiving unit;

transferring the carrier through the duct system;

reducing the velocity of the carrier by passing the carrier through a braking tube disposed in the duct system; and

receiving the carrier at the receiving unit.

~~22~~ 24. The system of Claim 1, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

~~23~~ 25. The system of Claim 5, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

~~24~~ 26. The system of Claim 9, wherein each first sending unit further includes:
a sending locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position
and an energized position;

the insertion door movable between the sealed and delivery positions when the
sending locking mechanism is in the de-energized position; and

the energized position of the sending locking mechanism adapted to hold the
insertion door in the sealed position.

~~25~~ 27. The system of Claim ~~26~~ 24, wherein each sending locking mechanism includes a
solenoid configured to move the locking mechanism between the de-energized
and energized positions.

~~26~~ 28. The system of Claim ~~27~~ 25, wherein each sending locking mechanism further
includes a locking cam, the locking cam being pivotally mounted on the first

sending unit, the locking cam being pivoted by the solenoid.

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The system of Claim 26, wherein the sending locking mechanism of one of the first sending units is in communication with at least one other sending locking mechanism.

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The system of Claim 26, wherein each first sending unit further includes:
a sending switch having open and closed positions; and
the sending switch being in communication with the sending locking mechanism
of at least one other first sending unit.

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The system of Claim 26, wherein the first power unit is in fluid communication with the first duct system;
the first power unit selectively applying a reduced fluid pressure to the first duct system;
the reduced fluid pressure being adapted to transfer the carrier from the one of the initial locations to the terminal location;
the first power unit being switchable between an on position and an off position;
the on position of the first power unit corresponding with application of the reduced fluid pressure; and
the on position of the first power unit corresponding with at least one of the sending switches being in the closed position.

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The system of Claim 26, wherein the receiving unit is formed with a first reception cavity and a removal opening, the first reception cavity adapted to receive the carrier from the first duct system, the removal opening adapted to provide communication between the first reception cavity and the exterior of the receiving unit.

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The system of Claim 32, wherein the first duct system is in fluid communication with the first reception cavity and further comprising an access door movable between an open position and a closed position, the access door adapted to permit access to the first reception cavity from the exterior of the receiving unit when in the open position, the access door adapted to prevent fluid communication between the exterior of the receiving unit and the first reception cavity when in the closed position.

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The system of Claim 33, wherein the receiving unit further includes a receiving switch movable between an open position and a closed position;
the open position of the receiving switch corresponding with the open position of the access door;

the closed position of the receiving switch corresponding with the closed position of the access door;

all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units being in the energized position when the receiving switch is in the open position; and

all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units being in the de-energized position when the receiving switch is in the closed position.

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The system of Claim 34, wherein each first sending unit further includes a sending switch and wherein the receiving unit includes a receiving locking mechanism;

the receiving locking mechanism being movable between a de-energized position and an energized position;

the receiving locking mechanism in the de-energized position permitting the access door to move between the open and closed positions;

the receiving locking mechanism in the energized position preventing the access door in the closed position from moving away from the closed position;

each sending switch being operable between an open position and a closed position;

the de-energized position of the receiving locking mechanism and all of the sending locking mechanisms of the first sending units corresponding with all of the sending switches being in the open position and the receiving switch being in the closed position;

the closed position of the sending switch of any one of the first sending units corresponding with the receiving locking mechanism and the sending locking mechanisms of at least the other of the first sending units being in the energized position; and

the open position of the receiving switch corresponding with all of the sending locking mechanisms being in the energized position.


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The system of Claim 10, wherein the carrier is a flexible and collapsible delivery pouch.

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